

Part Four

The Master Plan



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Basic Premiss/Rules of Interpretation

This master plan is a compilation of community ideas that have evolved over several years of study, thought, neighborhood socializing and community planning in efforts to build a better community. The basic premise of the plan is to help shape future development and redevelopment to be more “urban” in character, pedestrian friendly, sustainable, and basically, more livable. The plan is not a master plan for the entire Corcoran Neighborhood, although the principles within it may apply elsewhere in the neighborhood.

The plan is a model of what “should” be built; it should not to be interpreted as what “will” be built. Where possible, it will be the CNO’s responsibility to guide and direct future change along a path that achieves consistency with the overall principles in this and other CNO plans.

The elements within this plan should be used to frame regulatory tools, such as zoning overlays or ordinances, to convey what is desired in public improvements to those responsible for building them, to focus community volunteers toward a common objective, or to convey a desired development pattern to a prospective developer, investor or property owner.

The plan is organized around an annotated and illustrative description of an direction that was generated through community workshops and past planning efforts. It is supported by a set of policies intended to implement the idea. Together the ideas work towards the vision for the Midtown area and its “revival” as a pedestrian friendly and transit oriented community.



Exploring the idea



Illustrating the policy or principle

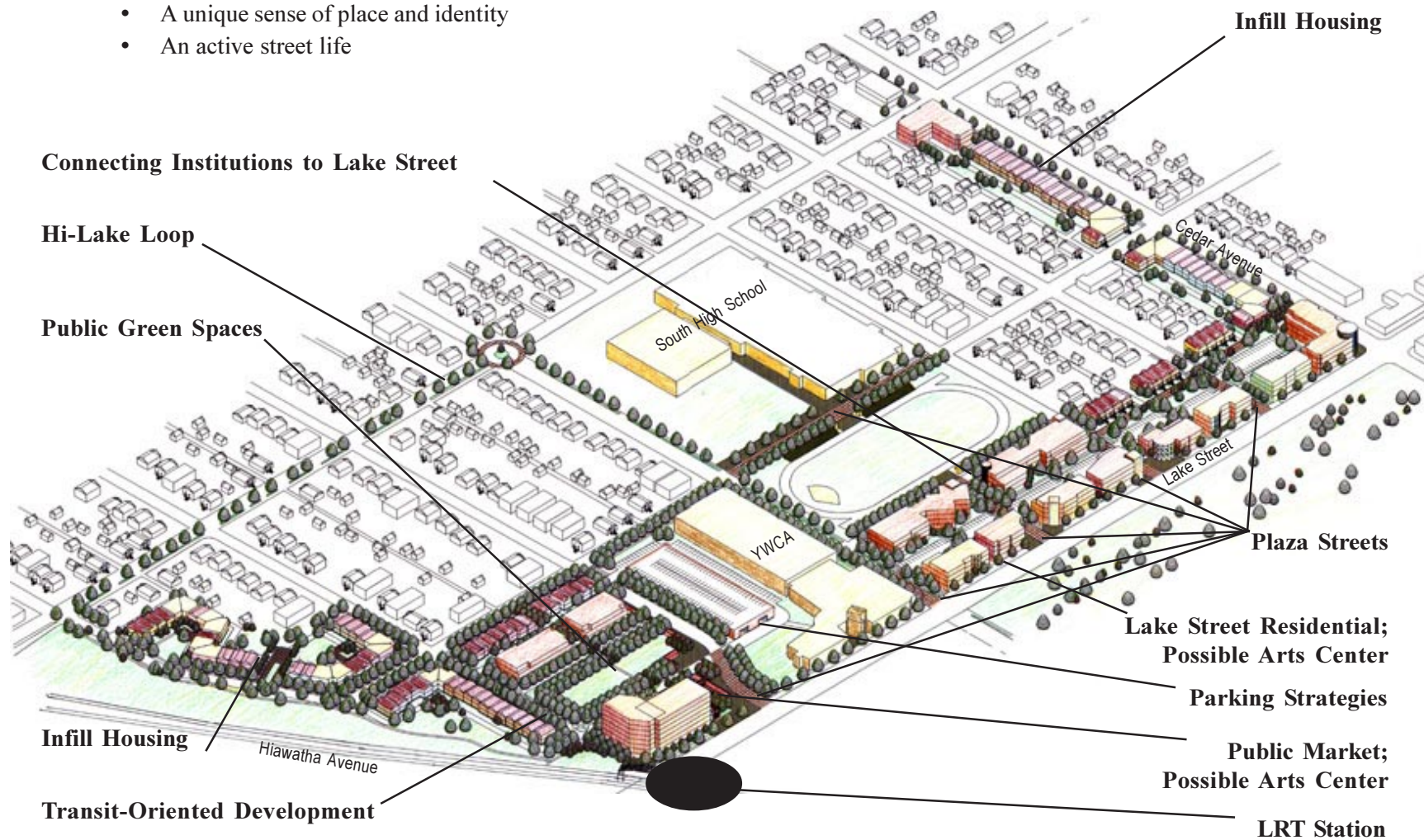


A real life application of the idea and the principle

Elements of the Plan

Ultimately, the Midtown area should reflect the following qualities:

- A distinctively urban neighborhood
- A clear orientation towards the pedestrian and transit
- A commitment to public spaces
- A unique sense of place and identity
- An active street life



The figure above illustrates the locations of some of the elements of the Corcoran Midtown Revival Master Plan.

Lake Street Residential

Along Lake Street between Cedar and Hiawatha the street should be an active street with retail uses at street level and generally two or three stories of housing above. An urban character suggests that Lake Street be framed by mixed use buildings. The retail uses at street level should be developed at a floor area ratio of not less than 0.5 consistent with the Hiawatha/Lake Station Area Master Plan. This level of intensity requires limiting the amount of off street surface parking, which can be made up for by building parking underground or using remote parking.

Residential units would consist of apartments and condominiums. Total building heights of three or four stories are appropriate along Lake Street and will provide views towards downtown Minneapolis over Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery or views of the Corcoran Neighborhood. Types of housing appropriate for Lake Street Residential include artist studios, loft apartments or condominiums with roof top gardens to help create a unique identity for the Corcoran neighborhood.



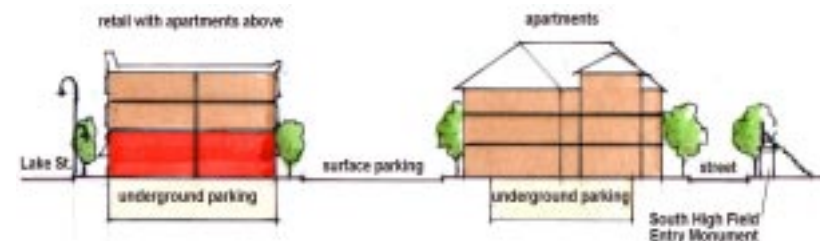
Plan view of Lake Street Residential between Cedar Avenue and 21st Avenue. Level of intensity generally includes 3 or 4 story buildings with residential uses over street level retail. The intersection of Cedar and Lake should be 4 stories at a minimum.



Icons representing various types of housing appropriate for Lake Street Residential include (from left to right): Mixed use residential lofts over retail, senior housing, the Hundertwasser Haus/artist housing and rooftop gardens.



North elevation of Lake Street and 20th Avenue



Cross-section of development pattern between 19th Avenue and 20th Avenue



Cross-section of development pattern between Cedar Avenue and 19th Avenue



Loft apartments over street level retail.



Condominiums over shops below grade.



Senior housing over street level retail.



Apartments over street level retail.

Public Market

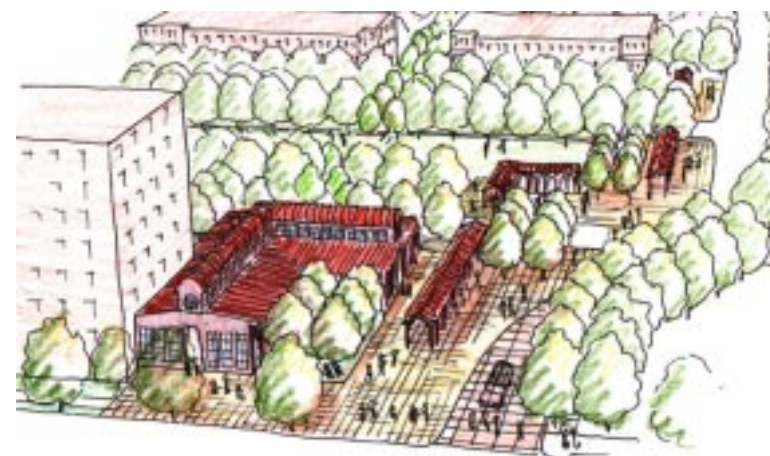
The Public Market is an enclosed building open year round with individual entrepreneurs located in small spaces who sell specialized goods, fresh foods and produce. It also might include local arts and crafts. The Public Market is discussed in greater detail in *Appendix B, Section III. Development Solutions* under subsection *A. Public Market Context*. The general goal of the public market concept is to provide a greater level of services to the Corcoran Neighborhood, to seize market potential and to provide places of employment. The public market would provide a unique service to both the neighborhood and the region and would establish an identity for Corcoran.



Icons used to illustrate elements of the Public Market concept during the public workshop.



The Public Market idea is proposed on the Edison/PPL site near the future LRT station. This location is strategic in that it can benefit from LRT riders who may decide to get off the train just to visit the public market.



A public market. Public spaces such as the plaza and pedestrian friendly streets are important components of the public market.



North elevation of Public Market site. The market is on the right and apartments on the left.



Public Market Hall--Reading, Pennsylvania



Vendors within a public market hall

Strolling Lake Street

Strolling Lake Street is about making Lake Street a more pedestrian friendly environment by enhancing the physical streetscape and establishing a more pedestrian and transit oriented land use pattern. The desired development pattern is one that presents a building facade that spans the majority, if not the entire lot frontage. Any break in a building facade lot frontage should be for mid-block pedestrian connections or public plazas. The facade should include windows and doors/entrances to retail shops and services. Streetscape enhancements, such as pedestrian scale lighting, landscaping and street furniture, should be included in future developments along Lake Street. The East End Revival report provides additional direction for enhancement of Lake Street.



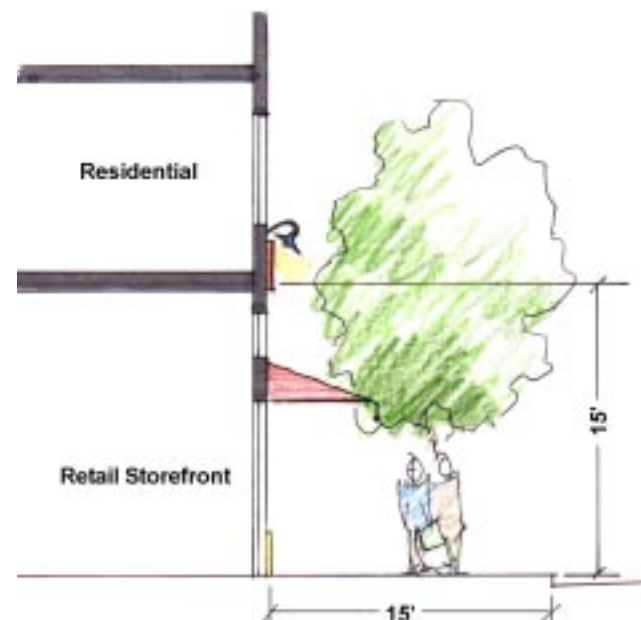
Key intersections along Lake Street should promote safe pedestrian crossings and include "signature" design elements that identify a presence in "Midtown".



Examples of enhancements that make a street more pedestrian-oriented include special markings at street crossings, unique architectural features that protect pedestrians from the elements, pedestrian corridors with activities, and active store fronts with residential uses above.



Icons used to illustrate elements of the "Strolling Lake Street" concept during the public workshop.



Sidewalks should have amenities but should not be cluttered with obstacles that make for difficult pedestrian movements.



Public spaces are pedestrian friendly.



Walking routes are interesting and safe.



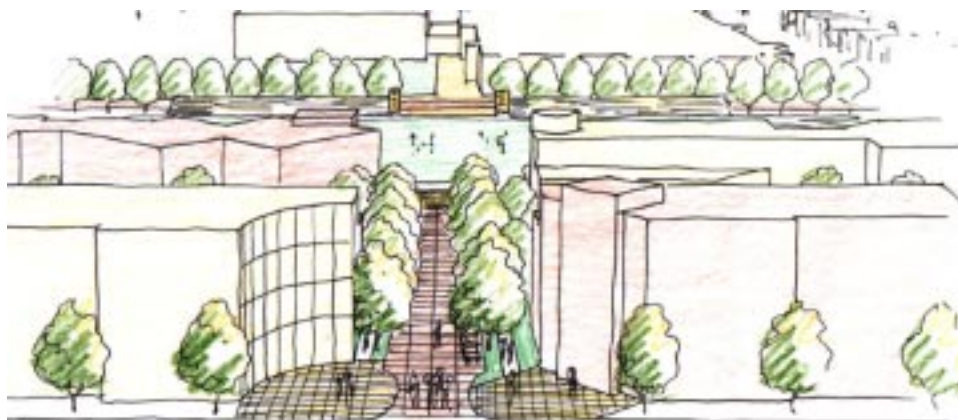
Mixed use with street level retail allows for longer hours of activity and sense of safety and comfort.



Mid-block pedestrian connection

Plaza Streets

The concept of “plaza streets” mixes pedestrian movement with autos in a more pedestrian friendly environment. The concept offers a unique identity for the Corcoran Neighborhood, distinguishing the primary activity corridor from the quieter residential neighborhood. Plaza streets function like a hallway leading from one room (Lake Street) to another room (the Corcoran Neighborhood). Plaza streets may include alternative paving patterns extending from Lake Street approximately the depth of the commercial development and its associated parking areas. The streets should provide parking for Lake Street commercial patrons, smooth traffic flow and a comfortable pedestrian environment.



20th Avenue plaza street creating connection to South High.



Current street looking north towards Lake Street. Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery in background.



Plaza Street in White Bear Lake, MN



20th Avenue plaza street creating connection to South High.



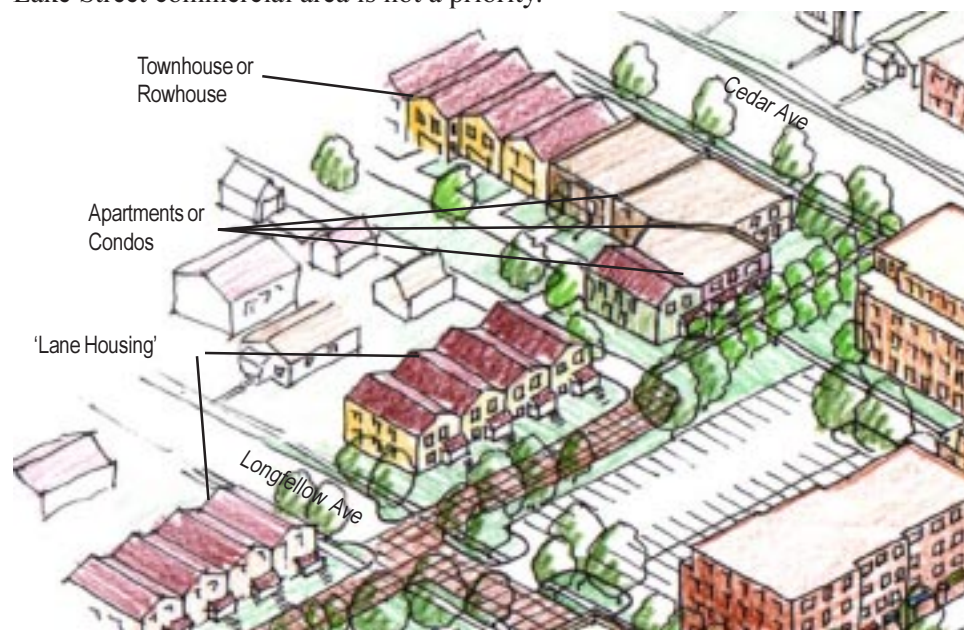
A plaza street along 23rd creates a strong pedestrian connection between a future public library at 38th Street and LRT



Plaza streets occur at all streets that extend from Lake Street into the neighborhood. A plaza street can help create a desired link between Lake Street and the football field at South High.

Infill Housing

Infill housing is a concept that sustains housing affordability and supports creation of transit oriented communities. Infill housing adds residential units to the area without compromising the existing residential character of the neighborhood. This might be accomplished through renovation of larger single family homes to duplexes, redeveloping dilapidated or blighted single family units with two, three or four unit structures or permitting apartments as accessory structures (i.e. carriage homes). Infill housing is illustrated in the concept plans as filling vacant or underutilized parcels near the LRT line, creating a transition between the more intense uses on Lake Street and the more established residential areas south of Lake Street. Rowhouses and townhomes are illustrated along Cedar Avenue as a long-term redevelopment potential. The desire is to create a pedestrian friendly street with units closer to the street, front porches and greater sense of activity. Redevelopment in this manner would not result in significantly higher density than exists, but it would be more desirable than the extension of commercial uses down Cedar or the expansion of larger apartment buildings. Redevelopment along Cedar south of the Cedar and Lake Street commercial area is not a priority.



Cedar Avenue and Lake Street area with "lane housing" fronting on a service lane that extends to an alley serving future long term redevelopment along Cedar Avenue and extending south.



As new higher density development occurs closer to existing residential, design patterns should transition to a lesser density. Here, apartments have individual entrances on the side of the building closest to existing low density residential.



Allowing apartments as accessory structures is a way to maintain a diversity of housing choices and provide another level of housing affordability.



The idea of 'lane housing' is an appropriate transition from commercial uses on Lake Street to the residential neighborhoods



Apartments in the form of rowhouses



Single family detached homes on very small lots helps diversify housing types in a higher density setting

Parking Strategies

Parking availability has been identified as a problem in the neighborhood during certain events and a potential problem with the advent of a light rail transit in the near future. Additionally, parking lots typically create a less than desirable image to a neighborhood striving for an urban identity. Therefore, the intent of this plan is to develop strategies to address parking quantities (especially associated with new development,) to control commuter parking associated with LRT, and to address the image that parking facilities impose on the neighborhood. Several strategies have been applied successfully across the country. However, it must be understood that parking (and traffic) are intrinsic to the fabric of an urban neighborhood. Very few urban neighborhoods do not perceive parking as a problem. Parking strategies appropriate to Corcoran include:

- orchard parking--requiring additional interior landscaping
- structured parking--parking should be encouraged vertically, above ground or underground
- remote parking--permitting developments to meet parking needs off site
- parking maximums (zoning regulations)--placing limits on the amount of parking a particular use can provide rather than requiring a specific number of parking spaces
- underground parking--parking should be encouraged under developments especially for office and residential uses
- shared parking--developments with complementary uses can share parking
- car sharing--a program initiated by a for-profit company to share cars thus reducing the number of cars on the street
- critical areas parking--a program through the City that issues permits for parking in a neighborhood with parking shortages



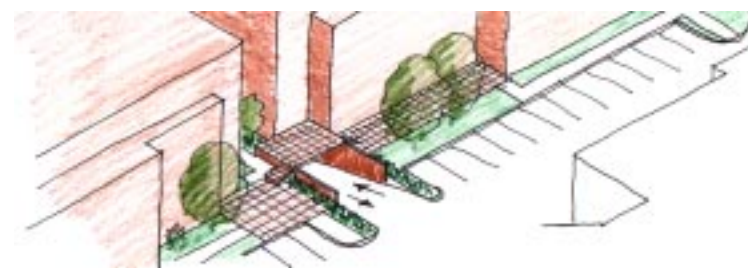
Parking at street level in this structure is well designed to minimize the appearance of parking and blend in with a more retail looking front. Retail stores are located at street level at the street corners of the two developments shown above.



Orchard parking suggests greater interior landscape requirements, ongoing maintenance commitments to replace dead or dying landscaping and distinguished pedestrian pathways.



Shared parking strategies and remote parking strategies could be applied though increasing parking capacity at the YWCA and parking facilities associated with future redevelopment of the Hi-Lake Shopping Center. Cost effective underground parking could be built under the public green to support higher density development on the Edison/PPL site and providing parking for the public market.



Parking should be encouraged underground with access gained from parking lots and not from major streets

Public Green Spaces

Public green spaces are a vital part of healthy neighborhoods. Corcoran Park located south of 33rd Street between 19th Avenue and 20th Avenue serves as the Corcoran Neighborhood's primary park facility with active recreational programs arranged for the park. South High's athletic field is primarily intended for South High students and is generally not available for use as a community play area; however, the corner lot directly south of the athletic field serves as an open area for passive neighborhood activity. Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery is also a public green space that provides a reprieve from the built environment of an urban community. Future redevelopment should incorporate public green space.



Icons used to illustrate "green spaces" at the workshop included rooftop gardens, communal gardens and pocket parks.



The Midtown Revival Master Plan suggests open space along the LRT tracks running south from Lake Street at least to 32nd Street. While located in the back yards of residential units, landscaping and low level lighting should be designed to provide a clear and yet transparent distinction between public and private realm. This corridor provides a connection between the LRT station and the Corcoran Neighborhood. A larger open space in the front yards of higher density residential units should serve as the residential units "back yards," an unprogrammed place to play.



Public open spaces should be designed as an integral element of the development and the neighborhood. The court yard at right is a more intimate open space specific to a development, while the open field at left is a part of a greater community.



Unprogrammed open spaces (such as the playfield at left) as well as programmed open spaces (such as the community garden at right) add value to neighborhoods.



South High Athletic Field



Pioneers and Soldiers Cemetery



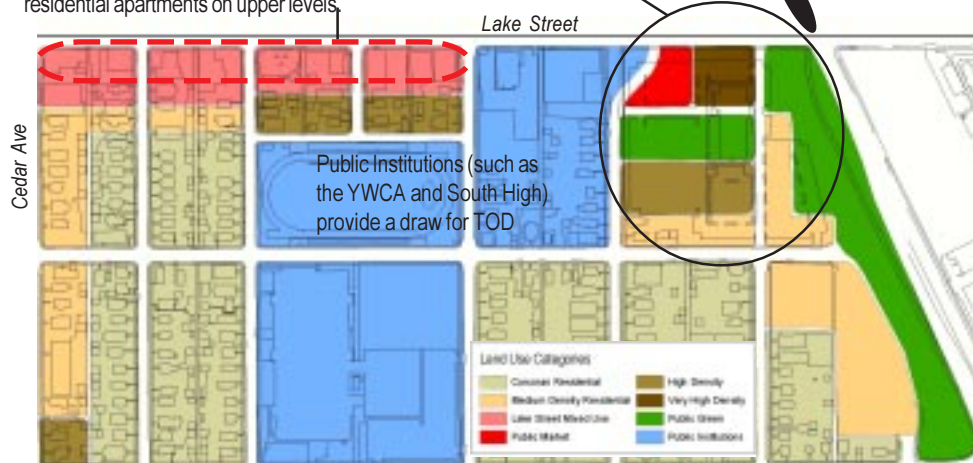
Important Open Spaces that currently serve the neighborhood include South High's athletic field and the open space at the southwest corner of 21st Avenue and 31st Street. These spaces are owned by semipublic entities but generally serve a public purpose.

Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-Oriented Development is seen as a key contributor to the revival of the lost art of place-making – the creation and restoration of compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use urban neighborhoods containing housing, workplaces, shops, entertainment, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily lives of their residents – all within easy walking distance. TOD promotes the increased use of public transit choices (walking, biking, busing, commuter rail and light rail), instead of designing and building communities that rely primarily on the auto for transportation. Central to the concept of TOD is a multi-modal transit station, in this case the Hi-Lake LRT station which provides a connecting point for local bus service and light rail. Surrounding the station is a mix of uses designed in a high density, compact and walkable manner. Desirable TOD densities are outlined in the Hiawatha/Lake Station Area Master Plan. Generally development should be higher density but should not exceed six story building heights (six stories above grade) and should step down in height as development approaches the existing lower density residential development south of 31st and 32nd Street or as development moves further from the LRT station.

Highest Density node closest to LRT Station with 4 to 6 story apartments, public market, public green and specialty retail.

Mixed-use street level commercial with residential apartments on upper levels.



This map illustrates a future land use pattern supportive of the master plan. The land use pattern demonstrates a transit-oriented development pattern with high density mixed uses nearest the new LRT station and a gradual transition of residential density as development opportunities move further from the LRT station.



Mixed use, street level retail with residential above results in a comfortable pedestrian environment



Mixed-use residential over retail in a high density (six story) building



Multi-modal transit station—LRT foreground and bus in background



Mixed-use residential and retail oriented towards public plaza with vertical architectural articulation

Hi-Lake Loop

The Hi-Lake Loop is a pedestrian and bicycle oriented route along 21st Avenue and 32nd Street that still accommodates vehicles facilitates non-auto circulation, and establishes a “boundary” composed of enhanced streetscapes that marks a more intensely developed core of transit-oriented development.

The Hi-Lake Loop connects to Lake Street and the Longfellow Neighborhood at Minnehaha Avenue. In the Corcoran neighborhood the Hi-Lake Loop follows 21st Avenue to the Midtown Greenway. Other connections might include a link to 38th Street along 23rd Avenue (a plaza street), which provides a direct connection to the LRT station stop from a future public library site at 38th Street and 23rd Avenue.

Auto traffic will continue to be part of the circulation system in Corcoran. However, traffic calming initiatives must be part of the overall effort to enhance the pedestrian environment. Traffic calming initiatives should attempt to slow and control traffic as it travels through the neighborhood but not completely close it off from moving through the neighborhood. Closing through streets or creating cul-de-sacs is often seen as simply moving the problem from one street to the next.



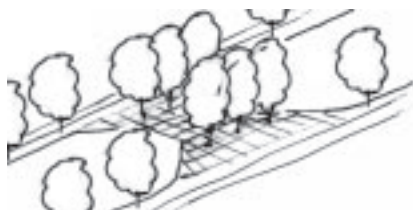
21st Avenue Corridor



22nd Avenue and Lake Street



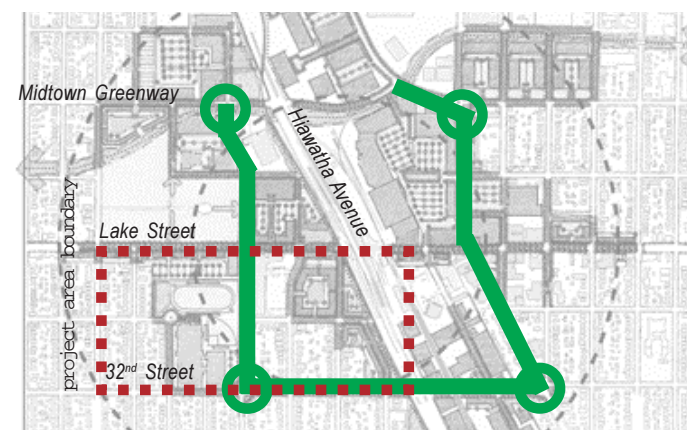
Pedestrian friendly street



Mobility within and through the Corcoran Neighborhood is critical to maintaining a pedestrian and transit oriented environment. Being able to move through the neighborhood can be enhanced with pedestrian and bicycle corridors and strategically located traffic calming improvements such as changes in pavement patterns, variations in street widths, traffic circles, raised pedestrian crossings (not speed bumps) and other traffic calming measures.



The Hi-Lake Loop follows 21st Street and 32nd Avenue. It provides connections to the Longfellow neighborhood to the east and to the Midtown Greenway to the north. The entire route is show below as an overlay on the Hi-Lake Station Area Master Plan.



The Hi-Lake Loop in its entirety.

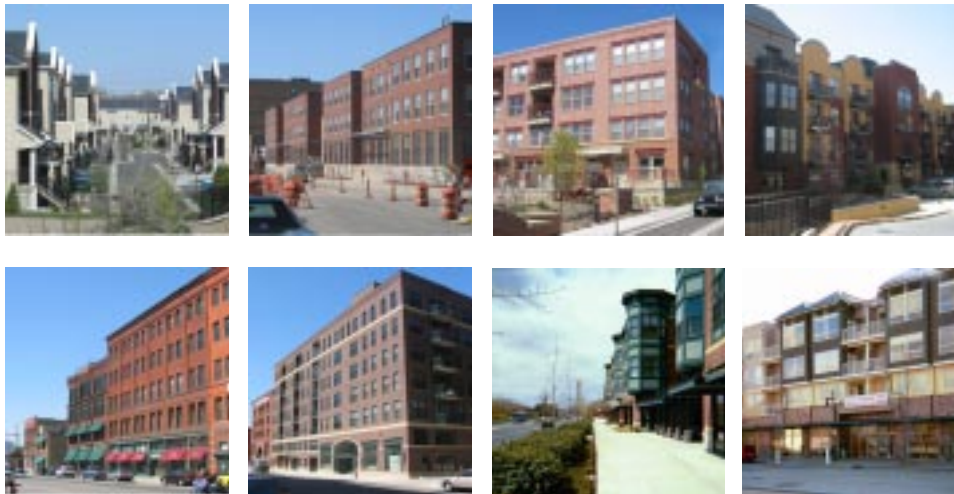
Hiawatha/Lake Street Station Area Master Plan - June 2000
Calthorpe Assoc., IBI Group, Oden + Stumpf Assoc.



Blending Density

A key principle of Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is compact or intense development patterns within a half mile of a multi-modal transit hub. This generally means taller buildings (taller than what exists in Corcoran today) designed in a compact, pedestrian oriented development pattern. Because the development pattern in Corcoran is of a lower density development pattern (relative to an urban setting), there exist some concerns within the neighborhood about how high a building should be. The planning efforts from the Hiawatha/Lake Street Station Area Master Plan and subsequent follow up meetings have set a standard of six stories as the maximum building height closest to the station south of Lake Street (the Edison/PPL site.) This plan supports the finding that six stories is a desirable building height closest to the station. Along Lake Street, four story buildings help establish character along Lake Street support the principles of TOD.

Concerns about building heights are based on neighborhood character and existing (as well as resulting) views. Taller buildings provide future tenants with optimal views toward downtown Minneapolis. They also contribute to an image of Corcoran from the LRT line, which is elevated above the neighborhood. There is some concern that they may alter views from the existing neighborhood. Through creative design, new higher density housing along Lake Street can blend with the character of established neighborhoods and lower density single family residential areas located south of 31st Street.



Examples of building heights ranging from two and a half story townhomes to six story buildings with street level retail services.

Master Plan



Articulation of the building facade and providing individual unit entrances offer a transition from higher density apartments to lower density duplexes and single family homes.



A cross section of the public market area illustrates a transitioning from a six story building to a 3 or 4 story building to a 2.5 story townhouse. This stepping down of building height provides a transition from new higher density buildings to existing lower density housing.



Taller buildings are appropriate across from the LRT station, South High, and Pioneer and Soldiers Cemetery. Blending of development character occurs where new development would be adjacent to existing Corcoran residential neighborhoods.

Civic buildings should be highlights of a neighborhood – a point of pride for a community, not buried and invisible along a major corridor like Lake Street. Forming a connection between South High and Lake Street offers an opportunity to place this institution in the fabric of the city while it serves the immediate neighborhood’s recreational and educational needs. Previous planning initiatives have incorporated the concept of the “Arts Center” with South High.

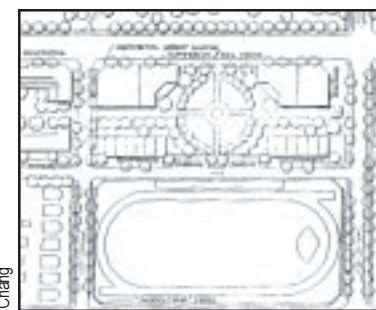
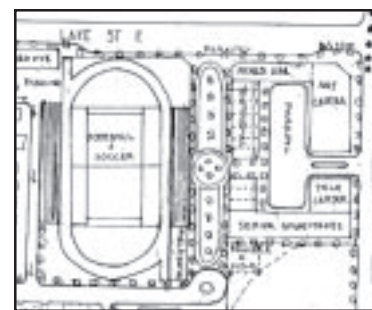
The Midtown Revival master plan establishes connections to South High via a “plaza street” (20th Avenue) extending from Lake Street to the athletic field. A grand entrance to the athletic field should be established at 20th Avenue by opening the bleachers and creating a view corridor directed to South High. Additionally, South High has been described as a rather utilitarian structure with minimal windows leading to an impression of being closed to the neighborhood. In this master plan a plaza street along 31st Street serves as an area for student project exhibits, recognition of significant achievements or tributes to alumni who have made significant contributions to the school and community.



The master plan facilitates a connection to South High through streetscape enhancements on 20th Avenue. This follows the principle that development, not parking (and not large areas of open space) should frame Lake Street and create a consistent urban streetscape.



Two alternative means of establishing a physical “gateway” or linkage by designing a permanent part of the streetscape.



Previous community planning efforts have evaluated ways in which to connect activities at South High to Lake Street including bringing the athletic field out to Lake Street or creating a open "plaza" like feature as a "gateway" to the athletic field.



Development frames a "plaza street" (20th Street) and the athletic field bleachers are redesigned to open up to the field and create a view from Lake to South High.

Arts Center

An arts-related facility would add to the diversity of activities and entertainment venues in the Corcoran neighborhood. Such a facility might feature live theatre, dance, music, and other live performance productions, visual arts exhibits, and areas for concessions, rehearsals, workshops, classes, and other functions.

Downtown areas in the Twin Cities have been able to maintain smaller arts venues which might suggest a healthy market for an arts and culture center in the Corcoran neighborhood. Examples of successfully operated facilities in smaller communities include the Lyric Arts Center in Anoka and the Hopkins Center for the Arts. These facilities typically have one or more “anchor” tenants – usually stage theatre groups – that will be able to stage 6 to 8 productions annually (with 2-3 week runs, excluding rehearsal and setup periods), occupying the facility’s main venue for roughly half the year. Other users typically include local dance studios, traveling productions, and local school/community groups such as choirs, orchestras and other performance ensembles. Neither of these facilities, however, are able to meet operating costs; shortfalls are funded by concessions sales, proceeds from fund-raising events, public funding and contributions from individuals and nonprofit arts groups.



Hopkins Center for the Arts includes a stage company as a major tenant and art and culture activities for a community much larger than Hopkins.



The Minnetonka Arts Center is located in the Minnetonka High School and is used primarily for theater productions.



Recent planning explorations have illustrated an arts center fronting Lake Street associated with the reconfiguration of the South High Campus and the addition of a Tech Center.

Potential locations for a community arts center



In the master plan, a possible location for the Arts Center is within the public market area, nearest the LRT station or as a street front use along Lake Street. In either case, an Art Center adds a unique element to the neighborhood that will become a destination and help support additional Lake Street commercial uses.

Supported/Targeted Development Quantities

The master plan presents a preferred development pattern for the Midtown Revival Area. The concept is based on an ideal vision, one that will not happen in a short period of time but rather an extended period of growth and change that would occur over a 10 to 20 year time horizon. The concepts illustrate a capacity of development that follows the Hiawatha/Lake Street Station Area Master Plan and other Corcoran planning initiatives. Proposed development should occur at a density high enough to achieve the suggested development quantities established by the master plan and outlined in the table at right. For reference, the Minneapolis Plan (adopted in March of 2000) projects growth of 700 housing units and 1,000 new jobs at the Hiawatha and Lake Street node and the Hiawatha/Lake Street Station Area Master Plan projects 1,250 housing units and 25,000 square feet of commercial along Lake Street west of Hiawatha. Commercial development is focused at Cedar Avenue and Lake Street and the Hi-Lake Shopping area. Housing is focused on the Edison/PPL site and the Hi-Lake Shopping Center.

<u>Development Location</u>	<u>Housing Units</u>	<u>Commercial Square Feet</u>
1---Cedar and Lake	55 - 60	20,000
2---Lake Street	145 - 150	40,000
3---Edison/PPL +	215 - 220	10,000
TOTALS	415 - 430	70,000

Development projections according to development locations illustrated below and based on principles of TOD including street level retail along Lake Street, a public market, and a diversity of higher density housing with the highest density (six stories) nearest the LRT station.



The Master Plan illustrates areas anticipated for new housing redevelopment over the next 10 to 20 years (see outlined areas 1 - 3). Housing along Cedar Avenue as illustrated in the plan serves as a guide, but it is not a priority project.